

**CITRUS GROWER ASSOCIATES, INC.**

2930 WINTER LAKE ROAD  
LAKELAND, FLORIDA 33803  
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FAX: 863-667-3787

September 29, 2005

The Honorable Mike Johans  
Secretary of Agriculture  
USDA  
14<sup>th</sup> and Independence Ave.  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Johans:

Attached is the testimony in which I presented at your Farm Bill Forum in Orlando on  
September 27, 2005.

Sincerely yours,

  
J. T. Griffiths  
JTG/pw

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## **STATEMENT**

by

James T. Griffiths

Polk County Florida

on

September 27, 2005, before U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, the Honorable Mike Johanns.

Mr. Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is James T. Griffiths. I have been living and working in Polk County Florida since 1946. I had the opportunity before I came here to cast my presidential ballot for Alfred Landon in 1936 and for Wendell Wilkie in 1940.

I have been growing citrus since 1952. I'm currently still the owner of my original thirty acre grove, part of which I planted, and I manage a grower trade association which represents about 100,000 acres of citrus grove in Florida.

I want to urge creation within the Farm Bill of a source of funding to supply income for farmers whose operation, as efficient farmers, requires that they use practices and provide space for facilities which benefit and help maintain the natural ecosystems which are available for the benefit of this developed world we have made for ourselves.

The hydrologic dynamics of peninsular Florida revolve about the Floridan aquifer, underlying most of this peninsula as its source of water. However, its health is totally dependent upon the preservation of high recharge land, so that sufficient rainfall can maintain the potentiometric head.

Areas of depressed potentiometric pressure have been appearing over the last twenty-five to thirty years. There is a need to be sure that roofs, driveways, sidewalks, and paved roads don't supplant so much land surface that the benefits of natural recharge are no longer available. There is a real need to be certain that we can preserve the Floridan aquifer and not have to view its demise, as have the farmers of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas with the Ogallala aquifer there.

I am part of a working group. It, through the judicious use of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's) or a more sophisticated rural land stewardship program, hopes to make it possible to keep citrus grove in place on the sand Ridge of central Florida with TDR's for

a one time windfall benefit, plus a source of annual payments for maintaining land for recharging the Floridan aquifer as the source of drinking water for peninsular Florida.

That is one specific thing which can be a part of a much larger program that pays the farmer for farming, while at the same time preserving the atmosphere, the water and the natural resources for the city dweller. This can build on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program of the Natural Resources Conservation Service today.

This is also a part of helping the horticultural and specialty crops of this nation continue to farm.

Thank you for your consideration.



James T. Griffiths, Managing Director  
Citrus Grower Associates, Inc.  
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USDA  
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